

What is the Flu (Influenza)?

Influenza is a very contagious illness (caused by a virus) that strikes millions of Americans each year, with pneumonia as the most common complication in high-risk groups. Influenza, unlike the common cold, has a swift onset of severe symptoms beginning with two to seven days of fever, headache, muscle aches, extreme fatigue, runny nose and sore throat, and a cough that is often severe and may last seven days or more. Someone who has the flu spreads the virus by sneezing, coughing, or even talking. Flu may be transmitted by direct hand contact.

Additional resources:

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has a great web site about influenza and flu vaccinations (shots and nasal spray), [prevention](#), key facts about the flu etc. It can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/> or by clicking on the following:

[CDC Influenza \(Flu\) web page](#)

Flu Vaccine Supply

Update 9/20/05:

At this time, there is no expected shortage of flu vaccine. Please contact your normal health care provider for an appointment, if they do not have flu vaccine then see below for various locations. Questions about vaccine supply can be answered by going to:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flubulletin.htm>

Flu Vaccines

Injectable and intranasal vaccines both have formulations which include protection against A/California/7/2004 (H3N2)-like, A/New Caledonia/20/99 (H1N1)-like, and B/Shanghai/361/2002-like strains. The A/(H3N2) strain was the most prevalent during last year's flu season.

1. Injectable (trade names *Fluzone*, *Fluvirin*, *Fluarix*)

The traditional injected flu vaccine, which contains inactivated (killed) virus, is available for anyone age six months and older. Because there is no live virus in this vaccine, it cannot cause influenza. Some patients experience soreness at the injection site lasting less than two days, but serious side effects from this vaccine are extremely rare. It takes at two weeks for the vaccine to be effective, and will prevent illness in 70-90% of healthy adults under 65 years.

2. Intranasal (trade name *FluMist*)

A live attenuated (weakened) virus influenza vaccine (LAIV) that is sprayed into the nose (intranasal) is again available. The intranasal vaccine is licensed for healthy people age 5 to 49 years. Because it contains live virus that can be shed for an average of 3 days after vaccination; it should **NOT** be used for the high-risk groups who are recommended to receive the inactivated vaccine. SLOPHD does not have FluMist.

Local pharmacies and providers are authorized to administer FLU MIST to individuals who are 5 through 49 years of age, healthy and not pregnant. The Public may go to FluMist.org to find more information about this vaccine.

Persons who should not be vaccinated with Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine

- Persons aged less than 5 years of age or those aged 50 years or more,
- Persons with chronic disorders of the pulmonary or cardiovascular systems, persons with other underlying medical conditions, including such metabolic diseases as diabetes, renal dysfunction and hemoglobinopathies, or persons with known or suspected immunodeficiency

- diseases or who are receiving immunosuppressive therapies,
- Children or adolescents receiving aspirin or other salicylates,
- Persons with history of Guillian-Barré Syndrome
- Pregnant women or
- Persons with a history of hypersensitivity to any of the components of LAIV or to eggs.

Who should get a Flu Vaccine?

People who should receive flu vaccine include those at risk of complications if they get influenza disease, and adults *and children* who live, work, or may come in contact with people at high risk. Health care workers, especially those in long-term care facilities, should be vaccinated to help protect the high-risk patients for whom they provide care.

Persons in priority group 1, who should receive the flu vaccine:

- Persons age at least 65 years,
- Persons aged 2-64 years of age with a high-risk medical condition. (Persons with chronic disorders of the pulmonary or cardiovascular systems, persons with other underlying medical conditions, including such metabolic diseases as diabetes, renal dysfunction and hemoglobinopathies, or persons with known or suspected immunodeficiency diseases or who are receiving immunosuppressive therapies,
- Persons aged 2-64 who have any condition (spinal cord injury, cognitive dysfunction, etc) that can compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions or that can increase the risk for aspiration;
- All children 6-23 months of age.
- Women who will be pregnant during influenza season.
- Children 6 months to 18 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
- Health Care Personnel who provide direct patient care.
- Residents of Nursing Homes and Long Term Care facilities.
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children less than 6 months.

On October 24, 2005, all other priority groups may seek flu vaccinations:

- ❖ All adults 50 years of age and older.
- ❖ Household contacts of persons belonging to any of the priority groups listed above.
- ❖ Persons aged 2-49 years without high-risk conditions.

Who Should Not Be Vaccinated

Some people should not be vaccinated or should wait before getting vaccinated. They include:

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs.
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past.
- People who developed Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccine previously.
- Children less than 6 months of age. (Avoid crowded indoor places if possible)
- People who have a moderate or severe illness with a fever. (These people can get vaccinated once their symptoms lessen.)

If you have questions about whether you should get a flu vaccine, consult your health-care provider. Antiviral medications may be prescribe to prevent the flu if you have been exposed.

Who should get a Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine?

Important Reminder: Persons at high risk for influenza-related complications may also need immunization against pneumococcal pneumonia. This vaccine is given only once to most people, with a one-time revaccination recommended for people with certain medical conditions.

Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine or PPV23, should be given routinely to all adults 65 years of age and older, one time. The vaccine is also indicated for persons 2 years of age and older with normal immune systems who have a chronic illness, including cardio-vascular disease, pulmonary disease, diabetes, alcoholism, cirrhosis, or cerebrospinal fluid leak. This vaccine helps prevent invasive (meningitis or bacteremia) pneumococcal disease caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. Call the Public Health Department or your physician to schedule an appointment for this vaccination.

This is also a good time to check your immunization record for the date of your last **tetanus-diphtheria (or Td) booster**. If you haven't had one in over ten years, make an appointment with your physician or local PHD. Adults can get a Td vaccine for \$25 at the Health Department.

Where can you get a flu shot?

There are many sources of flu shots this year; most doctors will be caring for it this season – so call your health care provider, check your local newspaper, EOC Senior Health Screening 788-0827, Community Health Centers of the Central Coast, your local pharmacy, www.findaflushot.com, or call your local Public Health Department.

San Luis Obispo Public Health Department (PHD) will be having their Senior Flu Clinic Day **Friday October 28, 2005**. Two sites will be offering flu shot by appointment on that day, they are the Grover Beach PHD 473-7050 and the Paso Robles Senior Center 237-3880.

Children who need a flu shot can schedule an appointment with their provider or call their local Public Health Department Office:

- Grover Beach Office, 286 S. 16th Street, 805-473-7050
- Morro Bay Office, 760 Morro Bay Blvd., 805-772-6380
- Paso Robles Office, 723 Walnut Drive, 805-237-3050
- San Luis Obispo Office, 2191 Johnson Ave., 805-781-5500

Cost

Flu and pneumococcal vaccines are covered by Medicare Part B, Medi-Cal, and CHDP. If you have Medicare coverage and belong to a managed care plan or HMO, you should go to your HMO health care provider. If you do not have Medicare, Medi-Cal, or qualify for CHDP, the fee for injectable flu vaccine at SLO Public Health clinics is \$10. The fee for the pneumococcal pneumonia vaccine is \$33.00, plus \$25 if an office visit is needed. The PHD does not bill private insurances. ***Costs vary for flu and pneumococcal vaccines through other providers.***

Other Ways To Prevent The Flu

Good health habits are also an important way to help prevent the Flu.

- ***Avoid close contact.***
Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- ***Stay home when you are sick.***
If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- ***Cover your mouth and nose.***
Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- ***Clean your hands.***
Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- ***Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.***
Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

Influenza links

[The Three Types of Influenza Viruses \(from the CDC\)](#)

[CDC's Influenza: Flu in the United States](#)

[Prevention and Control of Influenza. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#)

[Prevention of Pneumococcal Disease. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#)

[The detection and control of influenza outbreaks in acute care facilities \(CDC\)](#)